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Bestselling Author Nathaniel Philbrick to Deliver 2015 Commencement Address

Renowned Massachusetts Supreme Court Chief Justice (Ret.) Roderick L. Ireland to deliver law school address



April 6, 2015 | Public Affairs Staff

BRISTOL, R.I. – National Book Award winner and *New York Times* bestselling author [Nathaniel Philbrick](#) – whose scholarship has made New England’s early history, from the Mayflower landing to the Battle of Bunker Hill, accessible to audiences both on the page and onscreen in the upcoming Ron Howard film *In the Heart of the Sea* – will address the Roger Williams University Class of 2015 and receive an honorary degree at the University’s Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 16.

“I am delighted to welcome Nat Philbrick, much of whose work is set in the University’s back yard, back to Roger Williams to share in the celebration of our students’ achievements on Commencement day,” says RWU President Donald J. Farish. “Nat’s work brings a broad diversity of perspectives to American history and explores themes of personal development and leadership set against the exploration of unpredictable frontiers – concepts our graduates will encounter as they embark upon the next chapter of their careers.”

The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. on the University’s main athletic field on the Bristol Campus at One Old Ferry Road. University Trustee and President of Samsung Electronics America Tim Baxter ’83 will also be awarded an honorary degree.

A day earlier, the Honorable Roderick L. Ireland – the recently retired Massachusetts Supreme Court chief justice who was the first African-American appointed to the state’s centuries-old bench and notably voted in favor of same-sex marriage as his state became the first in the nation to legalize it – will deliver the Commencement address and be awarded an honorary degree at the Roger Williams University School of Law ceremony.

The law school ceremony will begin at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 15, also on the University’s main athletic field. During the ceremony, the School of Law will present an honorary degree to Providence-based defense attorney Robert B. Mann of Mann & Mitchell.